

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1 1. A method for computer implemented management of assembly manufacturer, said
2 method comprising the steps of:
3 maintaining a database listing possible suppliers for a specified assembly component;
4 hierarchically ranking said possible suppliers within said database utilizing a plurality of
5 scoring parameters;
6 automatically selecting a limited number of possible suppliers based upon said
7 hierarchical rankings;
8 issuing an invitation to a bidders conference to each of said limited number of possible
9 suppliers;
10 thereafter, specifying to each of said limited number of possible suppliers an identity of
11 all of said limited number of possible suppliers; and
12 negotiating a final price and selecting a designated supplier for said specified assembly
13 component following said bidders conference.

1 2. The method for computer implemented management of assembly manufacturer
2 according to claim 1 wherein said step of hierarchically ranking said possible suppliers within
3 said database using a plurality of scoring parameters includes the step of hierarchically ranking
4 said possible suppliers based in part upon previous business experience with each possible
5 supplier.

1 3. The method for computer implemented management of assembly manufacturer
2 according to claim 1 wherein said step of hierarchically ranking said possible suppliers within
3 said database using a plurality of scoring parameters includes the step of hierarchically ranking
4 said possible suppliers based in part upon confidence in stated pricing for each possible supplier.

1 4. The method for computer implemented management of assembly manufacturer
2 according to claim 1 wherein said step of hierarchically ranking said possible suppliers within
3 said database using a plurality of scoring parameters includes the step of hierarchically ranking
4 said possible suppliers based in part upon demonstrated manufacturing performance for each
5 possible supplier.

1 5. The method for computer implemented management of assembly manufacturer
2 according to claim 1 wherein the step of automatically selecting a limited number of possible
3 suppliers based upon said hierarchical ranking comprises the step of selecting at least a top three
4 hierarchically ranked possible suppliers.

1 6. The method for computer implemented management of assembly manufacturer
2 according to claim 1 further including the step issuing a Request for Quotation (RFQ) for said
3 specified assembly component prior to hierarchically ranking said possible suppliers within said
4 database utilizing a plurality of scoring parameters.

1 7. The method for computer implemented management of assembly manufacturer
2 according to claim 6 further including the step of reissuing said Request for Quotation (RFQ) for
3 said specified assembly component after automatically selecting a limited number of possible
4 suppliers based upon said hierarchical rankings.

1 8. The method for computer implemented management of assembly manufacturer
2 according to claim 7 further including the step validating responses received to said reissued
3 Request for Quotation (RFQ) utilizing cost estimates.

1 9. A computer system for managing assembly manufacturer, said computer system
2 comprising:
3 a database listing possible suppliers for a specified assembly component;
4 means for hierarchically ranking said possible suppliers within said database utilizing a
5 plurality of scoring parameters;
6 means for automatically selecting a limited number of possible suppliers based upon said
7 hierarchical rankings;
8 means for issuing an invitation to a bidder's conference to each of said limited number of
9 possible suppliers; and
10 means for thereafter specifying to each of said limited number of possible suppliers an
11 identity of all of said limited number of possible suppliers.